

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 L-01 H-02 INR-05 PM-03 PRS-01

SP-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 OMB-01 USIA-01

ABF-01 IGA-01 /042 W

----- 129073

R 161101Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 401

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 2178

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SU, US

SUBJECT: SUDANESE/USG RELATIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY: TIMELY OFFER EMERGENCY FLOOD RELIEF SEEMS TO HAVE POSTPONED NEGATIVE IMPACT HERE OF OUR FAILURE SO FAR CONSIDER GOS PL 480 REQUEST ON MERITS. ACTING HEAD FONOFF OPINED OUR RELATIONS CONTINUING MOVE FORWARD STEADILY, IF SLOWLY. EXPRESSING AGREEMENT, I INDICATED HOW GOS COULD BE HELPFUL IN FOSTERING THIS PROCESS. BELIEVE GOS WILL NEVER-THELESS CONTINUE KEEP BEADY EYE ON PL-480 REQUEST, RATIONALE FOR WHICH MAY WELL INDIRECTLY HAVE BEEN ENHANCED BY RECENT FLOOD DAMAGE. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING DISCUSSION OUR EMERGENCY FLOOD RELIEF AID WITH ACTING HEAD FONOFF BASHIR (KHARTOUM 2171), BASHIR COMMENTED THAT OUR SPEEDY AND UNPROMPTED INITIATIVE WAS PARTICULARLY HELPFUL SINCE HE HAD UNDERSTOOD FROM WASHINGTON THAT GOS PL-480 TITLE I REQUEST (KHARTOUM 1449) NOT YET APPROVED. HE ASKED WHETHER THIS WAS SO.

2. I TOLD BASHIR THAT PL-480 ISSUE HAD IN FACT BEEN DISCUSSED AT GREAT LENGTH DURING MY CONSULTATIONS, BUT THAT NO POSITIVE ACTION HAD YET BEEN TAKEN. I THEN OUTLINED
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OUR ANNUAL PL-480 PROCEDURES, STRESSING THAT FINAL DECISIONS

OFTEN NOT REACHED UNTIL LATE IN FISCAL YEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, OUR MODEST PL-480 ASSISTANCE IN FY 75 HAD NOT BEEN DECIDED UPON UNTIL LATE MAY. I ASSUMED DEPT. WOULD INSTRUCT EMBASSY WHENEVER IT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED USEFUL FOR US TO REVIEW GOS REQUIREMENTS AT TECHNICAL LEVEL. BASHIR REPLIED "GOOD." HE SAID THAT, WHILE SOME IN GOS DISAGREE, HE THOUGHT USG/GOS RELATIONS WERE STEADILY, IF SLOWLY, IMPROVING AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO. I REPLIED THAT, ON BASIS MY RECENT CONSULTATIONS, I SHARED BASHIR'S ASSESSMENT.

3. RECALLING AMERICAN SHOCK AT IRRESPONSIBLE GOS ACTION IN RELEASING EIGHT CONVICTED MURDERS OVER YEAR AGO, I THEN STRESSED TO BASHIR THAT THIS ACTION HAD UNDENIABLY CREATED MASSIVE "ICEBERG" IN THE SEA OF OUR BROAD BILATERAL RELATIONS. LIKE ALL ICEBERGS, THIS ONE WOULD MELT IN DUE COURSE. PROBLEM WAS TIMING. WHILE I DID NOT WISH TO SUGGEST ANY DIRECT LINK BETWEEN USG ACTION REGARDING PARTICULAR REMAINING "HOLDS" AND GOS INITIATIVES IN OTHER FIELDS, IT WAS OF COURSE OBVIOUS THAT THE WARMER THE CLIMATE BECAME, THE FASTER THE ICEBERG WOULD MELT. ACCORDINGLY, I HAD BEEN PLEASED NOTE SUDANESE FONMIN'S HELPFUL SUPPORT FOR SECRETARY'S SEPTEMBER 1 UNGA SPEECH (USUN 4133), AS WELL AS PRESIDENT NIMEIRI'S COURAGEOUS PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT OF SINAI ACCORDS, EVEN DURING PERIOD OF HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH DOMESTIC SECURITY (KHARTOUM 2105). I WAS CERTAIN DEPT WOULD BE GRATIFIED BY THESE EXAMPLES RESPONSIBLE SUDANESE ROLE IN REGIONAL AND WORLD AFFAIRS. BASHIR SAID THAT HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD.

4. COMMENT: IT CLEAR FROM FOREGOING THAT GOS ORIGINALLY HOPED I WOULD RETURN WITH SOME FAVORABLE NEWS RE PL-480 THOUGH REPORTS FROM AMBASSADOR DENG APPEAR TO HAVE MODIFIED THIS VIEW PRIOR MY ARRIVAL HERE. UNPROMPTED OFFER OF EMERGENCY FLOOD RELIEF THUS HAVE PROVIEN PARTICULARLY TIMELY. THIS ACTION, PLUS MY COMMENTS RE PL-480, SEEM TO HAVE REASSURED BASHIR TEMPORARILY RE GENERAL USG ATTITUDE. THIS WILL, OF COURSE, BE FURTHER CONFIRMED IF WE FIND IT POSSIBLE RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY TO ANY ADDITIONAL CONFIRMED NEED FOR FLOOD RELIEF. HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT GOS STILL HAS ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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EYE ON PL-480 BALL AND THAT, WHATEVER NEED FOR WHEAT MAY HAVE EXISTED WHEN REQUEST WAS MADE, IT MAY WELL HAVE BEEN INCREASED BY RECENT MAJOR KASSALA PROVINCE FLOODING. THIS CONNECTION, PRESS SEPT 16 SPEAKS OF NEW FLOODING IN BLUE NILE AND GEZIRA PROVINCES AND POSSIBLE INUNDATIONS IN NORTHERN PROVINCE. THIS HARDLY SURPRISING SINCE WE UNDERSTAND BLUE NILE AT HIGHEST LEVEL IN QUARTER CENTURY. BREWER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PL 480, NATURAL DISASTERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975KHARTO02178
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750321-0606
From: KHARTOUM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750949/aaaabque.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 AUG 2003 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <17 DEC 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SUDANESE/USG RELATIONS BEGIN SUMMARY: TIMELY OFFER EMERGENCY FLOOD RELIEF SEEMS
TAGS: PFOR, SU, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006